

State Program Standing Committee
Child, Adolescent, and Family Unit
Division of Mental Health
Department of Health
Agency of Human Services

Minutes of July 31 2005 Meeting
Weeks, Waterbury Complex

Present: Kathy Holsopple, Zachary Hughes, Karen Mehrtens, Joy Prior, Carl Theodore, Robin Yandell

Absent: Carla Brisson, Amy Churchill

Guests: Charlie Biss, Alice Maynard, Cindi Marshall

I. Updates

A. Minutes of the June meeting were approved as written.

B. Carl, Karen, and Kathy reported on their interview as part of the Planning Council with the federal mental health block grant site visitors. They said the interview was loosely structured and they appreciated the ideas the visitors shared about advocacy. The visitors wanted to know if the state took the input of the Council and the SPSCs seriously and asked how we see transformation here in Vermont.

Karen noted that it is difficult to build strong LPSCs. Carl believes that as a state we are missing an opportunity to build a unified voice due to the lack of communication with and from LPSCs. Perhaps we should ask for a quarterly or annual report. Kathy suggested incorporating one meeting every six months with LPSCs; one in the northern part of the state in the first six months of the year and one in the southern part for the second six months. Carl agreed that would help the SPSC and the Planning Council to hear what is happening at the local level.

C. DMH

- Sharon Moffatt will be Acting Commissioner of Health for a while. Sharon is a respected person and a good leader, and she knows the VDH system very well.
- Paul Blake has announced his retirement as of September 1 after 40 years of service with the state. VDH has started recruitment and hopes to have the position filled within a few months.
- Barbara Cimaglio, Deputy Commissioner for Alcohol and Substance Abuse, will also serve as Acting Deputy Commissioner for Mental Health until Paul's position is filled.

II. Designation

A. Recommendations regarding redesignation for Washington County Mental Health Tabled until September meeting.

III. Local Program Standing Committees

Kathy reported that the Vermont Federation will have an expanded capacity to help recruit families for the LPSCs now that they have filled the vacancy for the Assistant Director with Cindi Marshall.

The Federation wants to get more input from families. They have decided against the idea of sending out a survey to see what families want. Instead, they will go to each region and meet face to face with families. They tried to do that in Newport and St. Johnsbury in April and learned quite a bit about how not to do this. In June, they did much better in Lamoille. In September they have two different dates to try again in Newport and in St. Johnsbury. The topics of non-violent crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques are in high demand with families.

Robin noted that many families also ask their center for such a training. They will not do a training on physical interventions or restraint due to liability issues. However, they do now offer a 4-hour evening training on verbal de-escalation techniques with dinner twice a year. They usually have 20 people in each with a wait list.

Kathy noted that the Federation has done two videos.

- With DMH and UVM for use on the internet and in pediatricians' office on
 - how do you know if your child has an issue beyond normal developmental parameters
 - how do you find help
 - a bit about high level needs
 - supportive comments for parents
- PBS did 5-10 minute video on Peer Navigators and how families are helped with this model. It will be shown at the UN and in the US Congress.

IV. Hot Topics

It was noted that the Vermont Association for Mental Health and some other adult mental health advocacy organizations have been speaking out in favor of a Commissioner and separate department for mental health. Charlie believes that it is important for CAFU, this committee, and the Vermont Federation of Families to have a view on this topic and not just let the adult mental health community control the airwaves. Discussion of the pros and cons followed.

V. Public Comment

None.

VI. Potential agenda items for next meeting: September 25

- Recommendations on redesignation for WCMH
- Note time shifted to **10:00 – 12:00** and location to **room 107, Stanley Hall, Waterbury** complex to allow members to attend the State Team meeting launching the new initiative on transition age youth.